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IN THE ABSTRACT:

~~Previous data and present data using a specimen are matched with a group of reference patterns by a pattern matching unit (304). Through the pattern matching, most approximate reference patterns in the group of reference patterns are selected. A distance calculator (305) calculates a distance d between the selected two reference patterns A and B. A determining unit (306) compares the distance d with a threshold, and displays that a re-examination of a specimen is necessary before previous-value checking, when the distance d is greater than the threshold.~~

A pattern matching unit performs pattern matching on present data obtained this time in clinical examination of a part of a subject and previous data obtained last time in the clinical examination of the part with reference patterns. Reference patterns that are most closely approximate to the present data and the previous data are selected. A distance calculator calculates a distance between selected reference patterns. A determining unit determines whether a re-examination is necessary based on the distance.